

# ***NEWS RELEASE***

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***OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY  
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA  
San Diego, California***

***United States Attorney  
Karen P. Hewitt***

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***For Immediate Release***

**NEWS RELEASE SUMMARY** - February 16, 2007

United States Attorney Karen P. Hewitt announced that Saleh Mahmoud Zahran, and his wife, Maysa Ahmad Hason, were arraigned today in federal court in San Diego before Magistrate Judge William McCurine on a 31-count indictment charging them with crimes including tax fraud, Social Security fraud, Medi-Cal fraud, and aggravated identity theft. Zahran who also uses the name, "Mahmoud Saleh Akel," owns and operates a tax return preparation and bookkeeping business operating under two different names: Akel Business Services, and Silva Bookkeeping and Tax Services. Hason also uses other names, including "Missa Ahmad Akel," "Maysa Ahmad Zahran," and "Mausa Ahmad Abide."

According to the indictment, Zahran and Hason prepared and filed with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) at least 40 federal income tax returns claiming fraudulent refunds in excess of \$88,836, based on earned income credit. They also allegedly evaded income tax for the years 1997, 1998, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, and 2004, used Social Security numbers for numerous alias or fictitious names obtained based on fraudulent applications, used Social Security numbers of other persons without their knowledge or consent, and filed fraudulent applications to obtain medical care under Medi-Cal.

United States Attorney Hewitt said, "Identity theft and tax fraud are unacceptable threats to the financial security of our citizens and our country."

"Individuals, who intentionally circumvent our tax system for their own financial benefit, run the risk of prosecution. IRS Criminal Investigators will continue to use their financial expertise and aggressively work investigations that involve tax crimes and fraud," said Kenneth J. Hines, Special Agent in Charge, Criminal Investigation, San Diego Field Office.

The defendants are scheduled next to be in court on February 22, 2007 at 9:30 a.m., before Magistrate Judge McCurine for a detention hearing.

## **DEFENDANTS**

Case Number: 07cr0332WQH

SALEH MAHMOUD ZAHARAN

also known as: Mahmoud Saleh Akel

MAYSA AHMAD HASON

also known as: Missa Ahmad Akel, Maysa Ahmad Zahran, Mause Ahmad Abide

## **SUMMARY OF CHARGES**

Count 1: Conspiracy to Defraud the Government with Respect to Claims  
Title 18, United States Code, Section 286  
Maximum penalties: 10 years in custody; \$250,000 fine; Three years of supervised release

Counts 2-7: False, Fictitious, or Fraudulent Claims  
Title 18, United States Code, Section 287  
Maximum penalties: 5 years in custody; \$250,000 fine; One year of supervised release

Counts 8-13: Use of a Social Security Number Obtained Based on False Information  
Title 42, United States Code, Section 408(a)(7)(A)  
Maximum penalties: 5 years in custody; \$250,000 fine; One year of supervised release

Counts 14-17: Fraudulent Use of the Social Security Number of Another Person  
Title 42, United States Code, Section 408(a)(8)  
Maximum penalties: 5 years in custody; \$250,000 fine; One year of supervised release

Counts 18-21: Aggravated Identity Theft  
Title 18, United States Code, Section 1028A  
Maximum penalties: 2-year minimum mandatory custodial term to run consecutively to any  
other term of imprisonment; \$250,000 fine; One year of supervised release

Counts 22-24: False Statements (Medi-Cal fraud)  
Title 18, United States Code, Section 1001  
Maximum penalties: 5 years in custody; \$250,000 fine; One year of supervised release

Counts 25-31: Income Tax Evasion  
Title 26, United States Code, Section 7201  
Maximum penalties: 5 years in custody; \$250,000 fine (plus costs of prosecution)  
One year of supervised release

### **AGENCIES**

Internal Revenue Service, Criminal Investigation Division  
Social Security Administration  
California Department of Health Services

**An indictment itself is not evidence that the defendants committed the crimes charged.  
The defendants are presumed innocent until the Government meets its burden in court  
of proving guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.**